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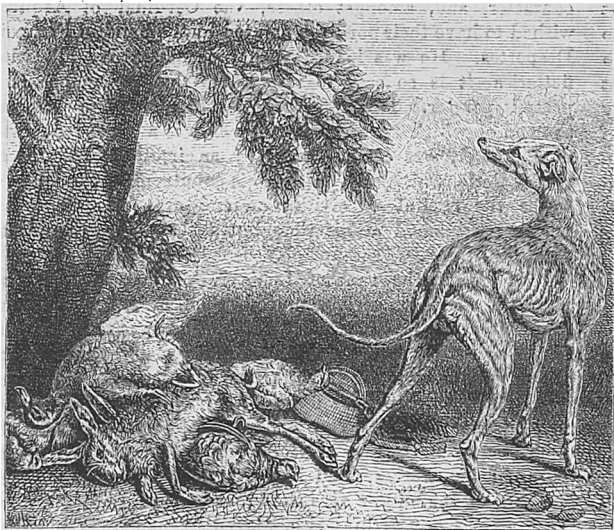
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## ALEXANDER FRANCOIS DESPORTES.



Dogs and horses have always been the favourite animals selected by artists for delineation. This is natural, especially



in the case of the dog, which has been a kind of friend to man. The attachment and fidelity, the clever and surprising

instinct of this creature, and its usefulness in so many ways, create a sympathy for the canine race that can scarcely be experienced for any other. It would be a wondrous book which should tell all the tales of affection, of fidelity, of cunning, of instinct, which are true of this beast. Whether we look at the brute as a shepherd's companion, as the guard of the house, as the guide of the blind, or the saviour of the perishing traveller in the snow-drift; whether we admire the fleet hound, the beautiful Newfoundland, the magnificent Mont St. Bernard, or the faithful cur, there is always something to interest and captivate the attention. The quickness of comprehension, the patience under fatigue, the acute senses of the dog, are, on many occasions, wonderful. Is it a matter of surprise, then, that painters have been found to devote almost their whole energies, their entire capabilities as artists, to the history of the dog? This has been more the case in England than elsewhere.

François Desportes was the first French artist who painted animals and hunting scenes. The French school of painting, which had flourished about a hundred and fifty years, had never thought of descending to animals—at all events, as the principal personages of a composition; and after the Renaissance there was not, properly speaking, one painter of domestic subjects in the whole French school previous to the days of Desportes. It is true, that Sebastian Bourdon had dashed off in his leisure moments

some masterpieces, but it was simply to rest himself from his great historical works. The Lenains, though really fond of country scenes, had only obtained indulgence for such departure from high artistic notions by painting religious subjects. As for Baptiste, who was a flower-painter, he treated his subject in a showy style, and with so much nobility, that the gentlemen of the Academy did not think him unworthy of being one of their venerable body, which, as elsewhere, was generally made up of the second and third rates of art and literature; just as, in the Academy of Paris, Lamartine is not a member, Victor Hugo is not a member, and Alfred de Musset is not a member; while the Duke de Noailles and, with two or three exceptions, thirty and odd non-entities fill the academic chairs.

It is a fact worth noticing, that the public and posterity almost always give fame to men whom the learned cliques of the hour never would condescend to notice. Every one can tell of some genius of his own acquaintance, utterly neglected by the world, recognised only by a limited number of discerning friends. Learned associations and bodies never introduced to the world either a Milton, a Shakspeare, or a Byron. Even the literary fund of our own days does not fulfil its mission, since those relieved are generally but the outsiders of literature; while many of those doing battle, and desperately too, who might be saved from much pain and misery by timely-offered aid, never receive anything from its overflowing and bursting coffers.

But genius and talent have a much better means of appreciation than the favour of cliques. The man wholly neglected by the literary world, has but to appeal to the public, and if there be anything in him, he will be supported and appreciated. To return, however, to the particular subject of this article.

François Desportes was the first who imported into France the style which had been made illustrious and famous by the Sneyders in Flanders and the Benedettos in Italy. To form a painter of hunting scenes in France, it was necessary that he should live in the days of Louis XIV., that vain and proud monarch, and that he should have witnessed all the pompous importance which, induced by the cunning calculations of his intolerable pride, he gave to his own acts, his slightest gesture, his fancies, and his pleasures. It really did not appear too much in that day of courtly servility, that, because the king honoured the art of venery so far as to force a boar or hunt a stag, an eminent artist should come expressly to the hunt, follow with his eye the movements of the pack, watch the bounding leaps of the hounds, and paint the greyhounds and curs of his majesty.

"We lost in 1743," says D'Argenville, "an excellent painter in the person of François Desportes, born in 1661, at the village of Champigneulle, in Champagne. His father, who was a rich farmer, sent him at twelve years of age to Paris, to one of his uncles, who was established in business in that city. Poets and painters owe their extraction, not to any particular name or family, but to the beauty and fame of their works: that is their patent of nobility. During an interval of sickness, immediately on his arrival in town, his uncle gave him a drawing, which he copied in his bed. This trial and attempt, though crude and unfinished, demonstrated his taste for drawing, and he was put with Nicasius, a Flemish painter. This master was reputed to be a very good animal-painter." \*

Nicasius was in reality a pupil of Sneyders, from whom he had learnt the secret of that bold and unerring touch, that art of distinguishing each animal by a dash of his paint-brush, that talent of displaying by contrasts the colours and variety of action, those terrible combats of wild beasts, and those hunts with roaring lions, with bounding and furious tigers, with wild boars defending themselves against a pack of panting and torn dogs, which characterised his master. What Nicasius learnt from Sneyders, he transmitted to François

Desportes; but the lessons of the Flemish painter, taking root in the Frenchman's mind, became less wild and far more temperate in their effects. What was the wild fire of genius in Sneyders was graceful motion in Desportes; the fury which the proud comrade of Rubens infused into his animal-paintings was easily varied and changed into a composition quite as true, perhaps, but less warm and striking. The impulsive fire of the master became, on the canvas of the facile French artist, mere vivacity and quiet nature. Sneyders and Nicasius had painted the hunts of heroes and demi-gods; Desportes produced the hunting scenes of noblemen and country gentlemen.

Unfortunately, death removed Nicasius from the world ere he had quite formed his able and interesting pupil. Still it is easy to distinguish, in the freshness of colour of Desportes, in his free touch, in his decided tones, that he took immediate advantage of the advice and example of Nicasius. What is certain is, that Desportes, though very young, would never have another master. All that he did, when Nicasius died, was to devote himself with redoubled energy to his art. Resolved in his own mind to be a painter of hunting scenes, he devoted his whole attention to all that could serve to embellish his compositions; it was with this view that he drew the bas-reliefs from the antique which so often ornamented his pictures. He also studied figures from the model extensively; and when, at a later time, he painted portraits, he felt the impression of his severe early studies, in which he introduced, moreover, most of the objects which are furnished to the painter by the observation of real nature: plants, fruits, vegetables, animals of every kind, elephants, tortoises, serpents, living and dead, landscape, and even grotesque effects. He had not reached the age of thirty when his reputation was made. "He gave himself up first," says D'Argenville, "to all kinds of work undertaken by builders, whether roofs or stage scenery, ornaments, animals, etc.; and then he worked, in concert with Claude Audran, a clever ornamental painter, at the embellishment of the Chateau d'Anet and the Menagerie of Versailles. Everywhere we find a fertile and lively genius, full of truth and expression, a light touch, with an admirable tone."

His first appearance in the world—that is, in the world of fashion of the day—was not as a painter of hunting scenes. Some Polish noblemen, whose acquaintance he had made in Paris, and the Abbé de Polignac, ambassador of France at the court of king John Sobieski, persuaded Desportes to go to Poland. Presented to the king and queen, he painted their portraits, and from that moment became a great favourite at court. To be the king's painter, in the eyes of a courtier, is to be the king of painters. Men of the most distinguished character, and, amongst others, the Cardinal of Arquiien wished to have their portraits painted by the hand of François Desportes. He was loaded with presents, above all, with flatteries—it is so easy to respond to them when one is a portrait-painter. This popularity lasted about two years, at the end of which time Desportes, who was a true Frenchman in character, was carried away by an irresistible desire to revisit Paris, which city, like all his countrymen, he believed to be the capital of civilisation and art—an opinion not merely entertained in his time, but still widely prevalent at the present day.

Hunting, in the time of Louis XIV., was an expensive pleasure, more expensive, indeed, than at any subsequent period, the subjects of that king seeking always to imitate the gorgeous luxury of their master. Many a chronicler of the time has alluded to the huge preparations made to kill a poor deer. The king's venery formed a perfect army, which cost millions per annum. The woods and forests in the neighbourhood of Paris were carefully preserved and stocked with deer, bucks, wolves, wild boars, and other animals. The customs of the middle ages were revived, and Louis XIV., in hunting, as in everything else, played the part of a heartless and haughty tyrant. In summer the court went to Versailles, to Meudon, to Compiègne; in winter to Rambouillet and to Fontainebleau. These last woods, silent, gloomy, and solitary

\* "Abrégé de la Vie des plus fameux Peintres," vol. iv. p. 232. Paris, 1762.

during nine months of the year, became suddenly full of life, activity, and noise. From every part of the forest came to the rendezvous, the outriders seeking the wild beasts, detachments of *gens d'armes*, of servants in many-coloured liveries, of elegant lords mounted upon foaming steeds, king's messengers, chairs for the officers of hunting, carriages for the fair ladies invited to witness the scene, pages on horseback, cross-bow men, and the van containing the unfortunate deer. Behind this came the pack of two or three hundred dogs, held in leash by the king's outriders. The king always appeared last, his presence being theatrically announced by some lord-in-waiting.

Desportes, having again given way to his taste for painting animals and hunting scenes, was created by Louis XIV. historiographer of the chase to the king, and with that magnificence which was so familiar to him, because it cost him nothing, Louis generously presented him with a pension and a free lodging in the Louvre. If any animals were sent from India to the menagerie of Versailles, if any rare birds were presented to the king, Desportes was immediately requested to paint them. Attending all the royal hunts in his official capacity, he followed every act of the drama on horseback. He caught at the most interesting moment the attitudes of the dogs, their motions, their bounds, the deer at bay, the harkaway, and the death scene. When he had thoroughly seized the whole combination of lines and figures necessary to the complete realisation of his picture, he went to the kennel, and drew from nature the handsomest dogs of the pack, and when he had sketched four or five upon a sheet of paper, showed them to the king, who, recognising them, instantly took great delight in pointing them out by name. When he was satisfied with merely studying the structure of animals, their physiognomy, and the model of their forms, he contented himself with a charcoal drawing upon tinted paper without many shadows, the whole relieved with white chalk. Sometimes he caught them successfully with a pen and a little wash of India ink. But as most of his studies contained the elements of his picture, he took care to colour them, because he was thus able to prepare the exact tone as well as the outline. He then transferred his drawings to a coarse thick paper in oil—very excellent practice, if it is executed at one sitting. We have seen some very beautiful studies of dogs by Desportes in varied crayons of exquisite beauty; all amateurs have admired in these brilliancy, warmth, a careful and, at the same time, fanciful touch, as well as a close imitation of nature.\*

When a painter is protected by a king, even should he be clever, he is always received into the Royal Academy of Painting. François Desportes was admitted as a member of this institution on the 1st of August, 1699; he was then thirty-two years of age. His reception-picture is a celebrated piece. It represents him standing nobly in the attitude and costume of a hunter; and he has availed himself of this opportunity to display in union all his versatile talents. We see a magnificent dog, of the pointer breed, with elastic and muscular limbs, who, looking up at his master, as if to examine his countenance, charms us like a creation in some far more interesting department of life. At the feet of the hunter lie quantities of game, hares, pheasants, foxes, drawn with wonderful truth, in fine outline and clear relief, but all properly subordinated to the main figure of the composition, the hunter himself, a noble full-length portrait. He is leaning on his gun, which he holds in one hand, while with the other he impartially caresses a group of beautiful dogs. In the record of the Academy's proceedings we find a memorandum of Desportes' election, in 1704, as a member of the council—no inconsiderable honour, as it gave him a share in the power of distributing publicly the honours and rewards of the national art. His son, Claude François, also, at a later period, enjoyed a similar distinction.

That simplicity, that perfect interpretation of nature, which was the great virtue of Desportes' art, was not only characteristic of his small and more finished cabinet pieces: it is observable also in the large, elaborate, and more poetical productions. Yet there is never any conventionality in his works; never any trace of artistic dogmatism, by which we mean the pedantic insisting upon a set of stereotyped rules or canons, which form the technicalities by which inferior minds are trammelled. Intending to represent all the various incidents connected with the chase, from the figure of a sleeping dog to the animated tableau of the pack closing at full cry upon the victim, he allowed Nature, as it were, to preside over the design of his picture. He observed, and what he observed he reproduced on canvas, adding nothing from fancy, yet softening the crudities of the real scene by touches more truthful than imitation itself. In the beautiful specimens contained in the Louvre collection—"A Dog pointing at a Partridge," and "A Dog pointing at Pheasants"—we recognise details which tell at once that the artist was himself a sportsman. He paints dogs as our own illustrious Audubon, who did so much for the science of ornithology, painted birds—under the arches of the forest, in the natural studios where genuine art is most familiar and most at home. He seizes the sudden fixed expression of the creature's eye as it discovers the object of search, and as it is caught he paints it. A nervous contraction is visible in the animal's limbs, an eager anxiety expresses itself in its attitude; and to this menacing steadiness of the dog, with what subtle ingenuity does the painter oppose the trembling humility of its prey, crouching, and expecting vainly to escape its enemy by hiding low and quietly in the grass. Oudry, another painter of hunting scenes, was the successor, we may almost say the contemporary, of Desportes. It is not easy, at the first glance, to distinguish their works; for the peculiarities consist, not in deeply toned shades, or strongly marked outlines, but in those less perceptible tones, which mark the paintings of the two artists. Nor is it astonishing to find this general similarity, when we remember that the incidents of a chase are not in themselves very varied; the subjects of such a painter's representations are, indeed, nearly always the same. In addition to this, they had both derived their instructions and their inspiration from the same sources; they were pupils in the same school. Oudry derived from Largillière the principles of the Flemish masters, and Desportes, as we have already stated, was a disciple in the second degree of the celebrated Sneyders. Nevertheless, a closer examination reveals the difference between the works of these two painters. Desportes has an easy, free, abounding genius; he attentively remarked the aspects of nature, and he painted them as if by instinct; in fact, he diffuses over his pictures more of native grace and beauty than of scientific touches or reflection. Oudry, on the other hand, has an able pencil; he is a connoisseur who knows all the resources and varieties of his art; he is expert in the distribution of shadow and light; he combines his personages and objects into striking groups, and there is a unity, according to academical rules, in his productions for which we vainly seek in the works of Desportes, who was, as Montaigne would have said, an off-hand painter. He belonged to that generation of exuberant and glowing spirits, who, with a true spontaneous genius, appeared in the seventeenth century to invest its formal models with all the bright and rich drapery of the sixteenth. As a colourist he preserved, in a greater degree than Oudry, the traces of his Flemish teaching. The latter is often cold, gray, and monotonous; the former almost invariably fresh, vivid, and cheering, bringing out his tints most effectively through a transparent medium; and it is owing to this fact that his works, at first sight, seem to have more finish than they actually possess.

No doubt it is true, that Oudry, as an artist, possessed talents which did not belong to Desportes; he understood better the arrangement of a grand scene; he elevated into a more poetical creation the object he was painting. But how charming is Desportes in his naïve way! His very dogs are

\* Description de l'Académie Royale, des arts de peinture et de sculpture, par feu M. Guérard, secrétaire perpétuel de la dite Académie. Paris, 1715.

graceful, lively, and elegant; his birds fly lightly and buoyantly through the air. There are in the Louvre two pieces, each representing a cock-fight; the one by Desportes, the other by Oudry; for they were barbarians enough to think these exhibitions, disgraceful to any but savages, worthy of the efforts of their pencils. Oudry has placed his belligerent birds with somewhat more skill than his rival; one of them lies on its back, endeavouring to strike with its powerful claws at the other, which has thrown it down. Its plumage is brilliant and dazzling; the motion of its wings, of which one is thrown upwards so as to assume a pyramidal shape, is full of grandeur and power. These striking qualities are not observable in the composition of Desportes. He was unable to give to his bellicose scene so fiery an aspect, such a fierce mimicry of passionate human war. But the introduction of a crowd of fowls, witnesses of the affray, terrified

Since he succeeded in carrying to such marvellous perfection the humble branch of art to which he dedicated all his energies, there is no reason to dispute the probability of his having attained high excellence had he selected another branch. We are ourselves of opinion, however, that he understood his own talents perfectly, and went the length of his genius in delineating the hunting-scenes peculiarly adapted to the disposition of his mind.

The number of Desportes' productions was immense. From the day on which the celebrity of his name had opened to him a fortunate career, in the decoration, in high art, of panels, sideboards, and designs for doors and walls, he continued to labour without ceasing until he attained the age of sixty years. He, with Claude Audran, ornamented the Chateau of Anet, the menagerie of Versailles, and the palaces of Marly, Meudon, Ninette, and Fontainebleau. This last is one of the



THE WOLF HUNT.—FROM A PAINTING BY DESPORTES.

by the shocking combat which is taking place "in their honour," adds to the scene a piquancy, and a tone of delicate irony, similar to that which we discover in the exquisite fables of Lafontaine, and we cannot but give our preference to this, deficient as it is in the high science which marks the rival composition.

It has frequently been remarked, and not, we think, without some justice, that had not Desportes confined his efforts to the lowest department of art—such as dog and fowl-painting confessedly is—he might have ascended with success to the superior, devoted to the painting of fruits or flowers, and still nature. He did not find it difficult to mix upon his palette that rich vermillion, soft as velvet, required by fish, by the feathers of some birds, or the pale though glowing tints of gold, such as would have been needed had he taken the fruitage or the flowers of the East as objects for imitation.

most charming retreats in France; itself a picture, with the splendid forests sweeping round, the artificial lakes, the parks, the green and pleasant hills, the rocks heaped up in enchanting confusion, affording landscapes, from the midst of which we pass into the long quaint galleries in which Napoleon delighted, to find the most radiant spots in Italy, the palace-crowned isle of Isola Bella, the banks of the Arno and the Rhone, and the lakes of Como and Maggiore, interspersed amid snug Dutch interiors and hunting pieces, by Sneyder, Oudry, and Desportes. In 1735, this painter received a commission to execute eight large designs intended for the restoration of some of the Gobelins tapestries. Amid these we find one of his best productions, "A Stag at Bay." But it was not only in France that his pictures were appreciated and admired. He came to this country with the Duke d'Aumont, ambassador of Louis XIV., and left behind him many very agreeable and



talented compositions, amongst others "The Seasons," besides a name which was soon familiar and popular all over Europe. His pictures were, indeed, to be seen everywhere—in London, in Poland, at Munich, at Vienna, at Turin; and not long ago, M. Viardot discovered some in the museum of the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.\* This great and wonderful fertility is the less surprising when we reflect that Desportes lived eighty-two years, dying in 1743; and that he worked until an extreme old age with perfectly juvenile ardour; for never in any one of his productions does he show any falling off. The Abbé de Fontaine calls him the Nestor of painting.

The able and talented painter was also a worthy and good man. He married at thirty, was a good husband, and retained, in a profligate time and under the influence of a vicious court,

in France. They are no longer venerated or respected by the nation. They have vanished from popularity with the monarchy and the hunts. There is nothing of the old attachment to royalty now left in France. Men may call themselves monarchs, but they will never occupy the same place in the feeling of the nation as before the memorable year of 1789. Call a man emperor, king, president, he is still in reality only the ruler by the choice of the nation. The old solemn divine-right feeling has gone out with powder and paint, drawing-room abbés, and the Bastille. It cannot be revived. The admiration for Desportes, then, will be always in part simulated. But if we carry ourselves back to the days of Louis XIV., of royal pleasure and pomp, we can comprehend the vast importance of pictures which, blazoned



DOGS AND PARTRIDGES.—FROM A PAINTING BY DESPORTES.

the character of a man of honest and irreproachable life. He was extremely amiable, always lively, and perfectly simple in character. His physiognomy as seen in his portrait is that of an accomplished man, who was easy and pleasant in his manners. Delicate and proud, he had a great objection to the impertinent familiarity of fools. One day a moneyed man was boasting of his riches before many people, in an extremely offensive way. Desportes listened to him quietly for some time; but at last, irritated by his impertinence, cried out, "Sir, I could any day be what you are; but you can never be what I am."

The time, however, for the pictures of Desportes is past

on the entrance hall of the Muette, on the grand staircase of Meudon, or in the vestibule of the Castle of Compiègne, recalled every act of the hunting drama to old hunters, to the lively ladies who joined the chase, and to their gentlemen and pages.

It requires a considerable exercise of imagination to look on the wild boars, deers, and dogs of Desportes with the same eyes they were looked upon by Louis XIV. and the lords of his court, before old age in the king made it fashionable to despise mundane pleasures. We are actually compelled, when gazing at his pictures, to carry ourselves back a century, or to condemn them, especially in France, as out of place. It is a fact which artists would do well to ponder on, that many pictures lose much when they are seen in a time

\* Les Musées d'Allemagne et de Russie, par Louis Viardot. 1844.

and at a place which are not suitable to their being properly comprehended. They want the "local colour," the inspiration of the time. Who but a turf-man admires the portrait of a race-horse? But these pictures, arranged in vast galleries, where they are preserved because of their origin and for the love of art, the works of many masters resemble some of the heathen gods, for whom the Roman Pantheon was opened, and which, when once they were within the temple, lost the same day their private altars, their worship, their followers, and were but a multitude of random divinities, no longer recognised, or, at all events, worshipped without being understood.

But if Desportes is no longer understood or appreciated in France, where great but hardly successful efforts have been made to revive the gorgeous hunts of the days of Louis XIV., it will be a long time before his dogs and scenes of venery will be without value in England, where all such sports and pastimes form a part of the existence of a large portion of the community. The chase, against which much may reasonably be said, has, at all events, preserved for the English much of that stalwart character which is their boast; and though justly denounced as barbarous in its character and tendency, is not without some advantages to counterbalance the grave objections to which it is liable.

But though the French people do not and cannot appreciate Desportes, the Museum of the Louvre is rich in his pictures. In the catalogue of 1847 there were but five of his pictures; but the active and admirable director, Teanson, is believed to have hunted up the rest in the garrets of the Museum, for now we have three-and-twenty.

The first of these is a full-length portrait of Desportes, in his costume of a hunter, resting at the foot of a tree, with a pointer, a hound, and several pieces of game.

After this we have:—

"A Duck, a Partridge, a Hare, a Snipe, a Cabbage, some Pomegranates, Thistles, Onions, and Beetroot."

"Two sporting Dogs guarding some Game."

"A fine white Pointer, beside a vase of white porcelain."

"A Dog lying down, a Powder-horn, a Game-bag, a Jay, some gray Partridges, a Melon, some Apricots, some Peaches, some Grapes," with a background of scenery.

"A Dog pointing at some gray Partridges."

"Shooting Pheasants."

"Dogs and Partridges" (p. 125).

"A Dog watching some aquatic Birds."

"A Dog pointing with Partridges."

"A Boar-hunt," imitated from Sneyders.

"A couple of Dogs pointing at Pheasants, of which one is flying away."

"Some Prunes, Peaches, a Hare, a Parrot, and a Cat."

"Two Cocks fighting, a Fowl, and some Chickens."

"A Fox-hunt."

"Two English Dogs"—that is to say, of the King Charles breed—"hunting a Hare in a Park."

"Dogs and Pheasants."

"Dogs and Partridges."

"Guns, Game-bags, and Powder-horns."

All these paintings are admirable, both in conception and design.

There are many of the compositions of Desportes to be found in the museums of the provinces; in that of Grenoble there is a "Stag at Bay, surrounded by a pack of Hounds." In that of Lyons, eight pictures, "A Bear-hunt," and some still-nature pieces. The catalogue of the Rouen museum mentions "A Stag-hunt."

In the royal palaces of Fontainebleau, Versailles, Trianon, Meudon, Marly, La Muette, La Menagerie, a vast number of paintings by Desportes are to be found.

The Print department of the Royal Library is less rich than usual. There is a full-length "Portrait of Desportes," engraved by Ferrarois; "A Boar-hunt," engraved by the same and a series of ten dogs in different attitudes, engraved by Le Bas.

The productions of Desportes in France are rarely met with in sales, and their price is generally from £12 to £30.



## JOHN BOTH.

IF the reader would imagine a rough, savage and somewhat theatrical Claude Lorraine, he would at once understand without further description what was the peculiar style of Both of Italy, as he was wont to be called by his contemporaries. Between the rural style of Ruysdael and the historic conception of Poussin and of Claude there was a style to be created, and John Both filled up the gap. The question has often been asked, Why do men born within the cold and foggy regions of the North feel much more deeply the beauty and grandeur of nature than the children of the South? Whenever a northern painter—a Fleming, like Paul Bril; a Dutchman, like Berghem or Poelenburg; a Norman, like Guaspre; a Lorraine, like Claude—is introduced to Italian scenery, he appreciates and enjoys it quite as much as—French critics think more than—an Italian himself. Certainly, there are peculiarities and details of scenery which are more apt to strike the stranger than the man who has seen them from his birth. Warmed by novelty, the foreign painter feels and endeavours to convey all that poetry of landscape with which his mind is imbued.

A Dutch historian, whom we have often quoted, Arnold Houbraken, relates an anecdote of John Both, which is characteristic of this excellent painter.\* Van Der Hulk, burgo-

master of the town of Dordrecht, proposed a prize, for which Berghem and John Both were alone to compete. The worthy citizen wished to try the talent of these two friends. Both competitors were to receive the sum of 800 florins; but the victor was to receive in addition a magnificent present. Berghem painted on this occasion his masterpiece. It was a mountainous landscape, with numerous oxen, sheep, and goats. The trees, the terraces, and the sky, were painted with so much richness of tone and finish, that none doubted his carrying away the prize. But the landscape of John Both was not less admirable. There was so much light, and so much of the lofty and heroic style mingling with the rural, that none could decide between Berghem and Both. A generous and just connoisseur, the burgomaster of Dordrecht, put an end to the difficulty in a way that is worthy of being recorded in any history of art. "Gentlemen," said he, "you have not given me an opportunity of choosing between you. Both of you have merited the prize, and both of you must have it." †

In the country scenes of John Both, the principal objects are not silent shepherds keeping their flocks, nor the peasant driving his ass before him—but great trees with their lofty summits and their verdant boughs. He does not paint them cut by the trim gardener, nor does he represent

\* "Le Grand Théâtre des Peintres, et des Femmes Peintres des Pays Bas." The French translation of this work exists only in manuscript.

† De Camps relates this fact in his article on Berghem, in the second volume of his "Lives of Flemish and German Painters."